

TIPS

to Protect Children from Environmental Risks



Help children breathe easier

- Don't smoke and don't let others smoke in your home or car.
- Keep your home as clean as possible. Dust, mold, certain household pests, secondhand smoke, and pet dander can trigger asthma attacks and allergies.
- Limit outdoor activity on ozone alert days when air pollution is especially harmful.
- Walk, use bicycles, join or form carpools, and take public transportation.
- Limit motor vehicle idling.
- Avoid open burning.

Protect children from lead poisoning

- Get kids tested for lead by their doctor or health care provider.
- Test your home for lead paint hazards if it was built before 1978.
- Wash children's hands before they eat; wash bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Wash floors and window sills to protect kids from dust and peeling paint contaminated with lead—especially in older homes.
- Run the cold water for at least 30 seconds to flush lead from pipes.

Keep pesticides and other toxic chemicals away from children

- Store food and trash in closed containers to keep pests from coming into your home.
- Use baits and traps when you can; place baits and traps where kids can't get them.
- Read product labels and follow directions.
- Store pesticides and toxic chemicals where kids can't reach them—never put them in other containers that kids can mistake for food or drink.
- Keep children, toys, and pets away when pesticides are applied; don't let them play in fields, orchards, and gardens after pesticides have been used for at least the time recommended on the pesticide label.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before eating—peel them before eating, when possible.

Protect children from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

- Have fuel-burning appliances, furnace flues, and chimneys checked once a year.
- Never use gas ovens or burners for heat; never use barbecues or grills indoors or in the garage.
- Never sleep in rooms with unvented gas or kerosene space heaters.
- Don't run cars or lawnmowers in the garage.
- Install in sleeping areas a CO alarm that meets UL, IAS, or Canadian standards.

Protect children from contaminated fish and polluted water

- Be alert for local fish advisories or beach closings. Contact your local health department.
- Take used motor oil to a recycling center; properly dispose of toxic household chemicals.
- Learn what's in your drinking water—call your local public water supplier for annual drinking water quality reports; for private drinking water wells, have them tested annually by a certified laboratory. Call 1-800-426-4791 or contact www.epa.gov/safewater for help.

Safeguard children from high levels of radon

- Test your home for radon with a home test kit.
- Fix your home if your radon level is 4 pCi/L or higher. For help, call your state radon office or 1-800-SOS-RADON.

Protect children from too much sun

- Wear hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15+ on kids over six months; keep infants out of direct sunlight.
- Limit time in the mid-day sun—the sun is most intense between 10 and 4.

Keep children and mercury apart

- Eat a balanced diet but avoid fish with high levels of mercury.
- Replace mercury thermometers with digital thermometers.
- Don't let kids handle or play with mercury.
- Never heat or burn mercury.
- Contact your state or local health or environment department if mercury is spilled—never vacuum a spill.

